been paid their bills till 1099. The Member also submitted that the Chakai Railway station should be extended to the town. The next request of the Member was that substantial encouragement might be afforded to indigenous banking concerns. No doubt, sometime ago a loan was offered to a Quilon Bank, but the conditions laid down were such that the bank had to decline the offer. The scheme of a State-aided Bank should be brought into operation as early as possible. The representation of mercantile interests on the directorate should be adequate. The Government seemed to be obsessed with the idea that indigenous banking concerns should not have any voice in the management of that bank. It was a fundamentally wrong idea, and it had been vigorously criticised by the Economic Development Board. The Member thanked the Government for not accepting the proposal of the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies to enact a law restricting the freedom of Joint Stock Companies.

President's reply.—You suggest the organisation of a Department of Commerce and the appointment of a special officer at the head of that department. Your representation is noted for consideration.

As regards the loss entailed on account of the purchase of corrugated sheets for the Devaswom Department, the matter will be enquired into.

About the Railway from Kottarakara to the Cochin Harbour and about the State-aided bank, Government are unable to make any pronouncement at present.

As regards the delay in the matter of payments to certain contractors in Trivandrum, the Chief Engineer will be asked to make enquiries.

As regards the extension of the Railway into Trivandrum Town, that matter will be noted for further consideration.

V. PUBLIC WORKS.

51. Roads in the Planting Districts.

Mr. E. T. C. Farr (Member, South Travancore Planters' Association) drew the attention of the Government to the bad condition of the last five miles of the Pattanapuram—Konni road and the urgent need for more permanent work being done there than the usual maintenance grant would allow. The work was estimated to cost Rs. 20,000 and a provision of Rs. 5,000 had been already applied for to commence the work. In view of the present state of the road and the probability of its becoming well-nigh impassable for vehicular traffic during rains, he regretted that the amount asked for was not sanctioned by the Government. He also referred to the bridge on the 8th mile on the same road which was dangerous for wheeled traffic. He said that the platform in particular stood in need of immediate repair. Lastly, the Member wanted to know whether any work was being done on the first three miles of the Vadasserikara-Lahai road, which was in utter disrepair.

President's reply.—As regards the Pattanapuram-Konni road, an estimate for Rs. 19,900 is ready for metalling that road. The Finance Committee has not approved of the work of it. The work will be provided for in the next year's budget.

Then as regards the bridge on the eighth mile in the same road, orders will be issued to the Division Officer to carry out that work.

As regards the three miles of the Vadasserikara-Lahai road referred to, the bad portions have been ordered to be repaired.

52. Kottayam—Kumili road.

Mr. A. R. St. George (Member, Central Travancore Planters' Association) urged the need for permanently maintaining certain portions of the Kottayam—Kumili road between Kottayam and Mundakayam in good order. He pointed out that, even after making every allowance for the very bad monsoon, that portion of the road between the 15th and the 31st miles had been entirely neglected. Peermade was dependent for estate transport on motor lorry service from Kottayam to Mundakayam and the condition of that road last year had rendered the maintenance of a regular and adequate motor transport service very difficult. But the lorries themselves were being taxed very heavily. The Member said that, including toll and

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other charges, an expenditure of Rs. 716 per annum per lorry was being incurred; but he would not make any complaint on that score, if the roads were kept in good order. The Member said that he could not see why even after recovering all those tolls and other charges the road should be kept by the Government in such poor condition.

President's reply.—As you yourself have remarked, owing to the very bad monsoon that we have had, the road has been spoiled. The Chief Engineer says that every attempt will be made to maintain the road in good condition. Government will do all that is feasible to keep the road in order.

53. Some defects in the Public Works Department and suggestions for remedying them.

Mr. Kanakku Tampi Champakaraman Sankaran (Member, Kalkulam taluk) began by observing that the P. W. D. had hitherto remained under the guidance of talented Europeans who had left behind them monuments of their work. The Department was now, for the first time in its annals, guided by an Indian, honest and persevering, with experience of the country and its language. He then pointed out some defects in the working of the Department, with a view to have them remedied. In his opinion, the re-organisation of 1910 as also the subsequent re-organisations failed to secure adequate supervision of public works, though the pay of the staff was enhanced by such re-organisations. Though the Executive Engineers and most of the Assistant and Sub-Engineers were very just and sincere, they did not realise their responsibilities, with the result that corruption was rampant in the Department. He then began to speak of the responsibilities of the various officers in the Department, such as the Division Officers, Sub-Division Officers and the Section Officers, and spoke chiefly about the corruption prevailing among Section Officers. The present duties of the Section Officers were to prepare estimates and bills and submit them to the Division Officers. As those officers were mostly unqualified and inexperienced, the devolution of such duties on them entailed loss on the Government and heavy suffering on the people. The Member requested that those defects might be remedied by the Chief Engineer. The Member also detailed some of the vagaries of Supervisors. They accepted illegal gratification from contractors before preparing bills for works done. The Sub-Division Officers were helpless in the matter, as the Supervisors were backed up by the higher authorities. Under the head 'muster-roll labour' the maistries entered the names of some coolies not actually employed, though they were a certain percentage and gave the illegal income resulting therefrom to the Section Officers. False receipts were prepared for works reported to be carried out, but not actually so carried out. The spots where such works were done were reported to be in out-of-the way places, and inspection by the superior officers was impossible in such cases. The money naturally went into the pockets of the Section Officers. Again, the Section Officers themselves executed certain works, the names of some of their own men being put up as the contractors therefor. There was also peculation in the auction sale of avenue trees and of the right of fishing in public tanks. Successive re-organisations of the Department had not served to mitigate the evils complained of. Even if the evils were brought to notice, the most that was done was to transfer the officer concerned which had no deterrent effect. He thought that the fittest punishment for such officers was to be told that their services were dispensed with. Even if that was not possible, the facilities for such malpractises might be removed.

As regards Sub-Division Officers, the Member said that they were responsible officers, but that they served merely as a transmitting medium between the Section Office and the Division Office and that the responsibility of carrying out works should rest with them, they being assisted in big works by the Section Officers. The Section Officers' duties should be of an out-door nature and they should help the Sub-Division Officers, as far as possible, in the preparation of estimates, in the taking

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